THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

August/September 2013 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

A Culture of Encounter

by Pope Francis I

*Editor's Note: On May 22, Vatican Radio published the following summation of a homily delivered by Pope Francis that morning at Domus Santae Martae in Rome. The Gospel reading on that day was Mark 9:38-40: "**John said to Jesus, 'Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us.' Jesus replied, 'Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us.'"***

Wednesday's Gospel speaks to us about the disciples who prevented a person from outside their group from doing good. "They complain," the Pope said in his homily, "If he is not one of us, he cannot do good. If he is not of our party, he cannot do good." And Jesus corrects them: "Do not hinder him, he says, let him do good." The disciples, Pope Francis explains, "were a little intolerant," closed off by the idea of possessing the truth, convinced that "those who do not have the truth, cannot do good. This was wrong . . . Jesus broadens the horizon." Pope Francis said, "The root of this possibility of doing good – that we all have – is in creation."

"The Lord created us in His image and likeness, and we are the image of the Lord, and He does good, and all of us have this commandment at heart: Do good and do not do evil. All of us. 'But, Father, this is not Catholic! He cannot do good.' Yes, he can. He must. Not can: must! Because he has this commandment within him. Instead, this 'closing off' that imagines that those outside, everyone, cannot do good is a wall that leads to war and also to what some people throughout history have conceived of: killing in the name of God. That we can kill in the name of God. And that, simply, is blasphemy. To say that you can kill in the name of God is blasphemy."

"Instead," the Pope continued, "the Lord has created us in His image and likeness, and has given us this commandment in the depths of our heart: Do good and do not do evil."

"The Lord has redeemed all of us, all

of us, with the Blood of Christ: all of us, not just Catholics. Everyone! 'Father, the atheists?' Even the atheists. Everyone! And this Blood makes us children of God of the first class! We are created children in the likeness of God and the Blood of Christ has redeemed us all! And we all have a duty to do good. And this commandment for everyone to do good, I think, is a beautiful path towards peace. If we, each doing our own part, if we do good

(Continued on Page 2)

Abuse of Power

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

On June 10, Turkish police in Istambul fired tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets to disperse protesters decrying the increasingly authoritarian rule of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Many bystanders were gassed and beaten. Lawyers were dragged through the street and detained. That same day in Cairo, several artists and activists were wounded at a demonstration against restrictive policies of then President Mohamed Mursi. That night, 15,000 Russians marched in Moscow for the release of political prisoners, held without trial since 2011 for protesting President Vladimir Putin's dictatorial rule. The June 14th Iranian elections were marred by the intervention of Surpreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who banned all but the most conservative candidates. And then President Obama argued that widespread, warrantless surveillance of Americans was within his power. Not a very good week for democracy.

Lord Acton's famous warning, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," applies to every government and organization in every nation. Without vigorous and independent checks, power centralizes and squeezes liberty into an ever-shrinking corner. The conviction that people have inalienable rights, which no institution can abrogate, is becoming rare. Many Americans now think of civil rights in terms of license rather than liberty. They look to the government or other institutions to give them permission to express their point of view. The presumption nowadays is that, unless one has a permit, a protest must be

(Continued on Page 5)

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Encounter

(Continued from Page 1)

to others. If we meet there, doing good, and we go slowly, gently, little by little, we will make that culture of encounter. We need that so much. We must meet one another doing good. 'But I don't believe, Father. I am an atheist!' But do good: we will meet one another there."

"Doing good" the Pope explained, is not a matter of faith: "It is a duty, it is an identity card that our Father has given to all of us, because He has made us in His image and likeness. And He does good, always."

This was the final prayer of Pope Francis:

"Today is [the feast of] Santa Rita, Patron Saint of impossible things – but this seems impossible: let us ask of her this grace, this grace that all people would do good and that we would encounter one another in this work, which is a work of creation, like the creation of the Father. A work of the family, because we are all children of God, all of us, all of us! And God loves us, all of us! May Santa Rita grant us this grace, which seems almost impossible. Amen." Ω

Editor's Note: Pope Francis continues to break with convention to dramatically appeal for the poorest of the poor. The Boston Globe *reported on July 9 that Pope Francis traveled the day before to the tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa. This four-mile long, tree-less rock is the last place one would expect a pope to visit, but it is also the main port of entry into Europe for African migrants smuggled by boat from Libya or Tunisia. Pope Francis said that he went there to mourn a dozen migrants who drowned the week before and to make a plea against the "globalization of indifference" that greets those who risk their lives trying to reach Europe.*

Pope Francis greeted newly arrived Africans during an open-air Mass on a makeshift altar made of wood from shipwrecked migrant boats.

"Who wept for these people who were aboard the boat?" Francis asked in his homily. "For the young mothers who brought their babies? For these men who wanted to support their families?

"We are a society that has forgotten how to cry," he said.

He later tossed a wreath of flowers into the sea in memory of those who had died trying to make a better life for themselves and their families. He called their deaths "a thorn in the heart."

One of the banners that greeted the pope read, "Welcome among the least." While every pope appeals for the poor, the down-to-earth style of this pontiff seems so grounded that he would indeed be welcome among the least, a tribute that all Christians should aspire to receive.

Cynics might suggest the pope is seeking photo ops, but we believe Francis is sincere and eager to put flesh on the bones of his faith. Taking a page right out of his Santa Rita homily, Francis spoke directly to the Muslims on Lampedusa, saying: "The Church is with you in the search for a more dignified life for you and your families."

Fritz Eichenberg

Why Not Be A Beggar?

by Peter Maurin

Editor's Note: Peter Maurin (1877-1949) founded the Catholic Worker with Dorothy Day in 1933. He expressed his philosophy in "Easy Essays," like the following.

People who are in need
and are not afraid to beg
give to people not in need
the occasion to do good
for goodness' sake.

Modern society
calls the beggar
bum and panhandler
and gives him the bum's rush.

The Greeks used to say
that people in need
are the ambassadors of the gods.

We read in the Gospel:
"As long as you did it
to one of the least
of My brothers
you did it to Me."

While modern society
calls the beggars
bums and panhandlers,
they are in fact
the Ambassadors of God.

To be God's Ambassador
is something
to be proud of. Ω

Studying People Power

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

In the world, we are not just in a phase of resistance, but a phase of construction. We are taking apart this system that oppresses and robs us everyday. We are in small spaces and big spaces, destroying individualism and replacing it with solidarity, defeating apathy with organizing, defeating fear with recovery of the trust we have in one another. We are showing that people are no longer willing to live on their knees.

—Oscar Olivera
Bolivian labor organizer

In June, I attended the 2013 Fletcher Summer Institute, a week-long intensive on the advanced study of nonviolent conflict. The institute is a collaboration of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC), based in Washington, DC, and the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. ICNC's sole mission is to spread the understanding and use of civilian-based nonviolent resistance to defend human rights, justice, and self-rule. For the past eight years, it has annually convened activists, scholars, journalists, and policy makers at Tufts to share and refine their knowledge of the subject. Worcester's Center for Nonviolent Solutions, to which I belong, paid my registration fee, enabling me to spend a glorious week among a unique assemblage of the smart and the brave, studying people power.

Participants came from all over the world, and we looked like a working group of the United Nations as we convened each morning in a large classroom at the Fletcher School. I sat between Stephen Asek, a Cameroonian engaged in anti-corruption campaigns in his homeland, and Benny Wenda, a West Papuan tribal leader, eager to use nonviolent direct action in his people's struggle for independence from Indonesia. Indonesian authorities imprisoned Benny after he organized one of the colony's largest marches for independence. His life was threatened several times in jail, so he escaped through an air duct and fled to London, where he continues to work for Papuan independence.

In front of me sat a Tunisian academic interested in reforming his country's education system and to his right, the beautiful Lobsang Yangtso, a 28-year-old Tibetan scholar and activist. She too escaped her homeland and now lives in exile in New Delhi, India, where she is researching environmental impact of Chinese development in Tibet. On the other side of the room were people with equally exotic biographies including a young Pakistani woman working on girls' empowerment and Taliban counter-recruitment.

Our thirteen-hour days were packed with talks on the theory and application of civil resistance. Amid a dizzying array

Wilfred Owen Brigade

of power points and charts, academics lectured on topics such as: Strategic Planning and Tactical Innovation; How to Sustain and Build a Coalition; and even How to "Manage" Repression. By day two, the jet lag plaguing many of the participants gave way to animated exchanges.

"How do you manage fear?" someone called out during the talk about managing repression.

"You just forget about it," said Russian environmentalist Evgenia Chirokova

Since 2007, Evgenia has led a grass roots campaign against the construction of an $8 billion highway—approved by the Russian government—that would bisect the federally protected Khimki Forest located north of Moscow. The campaign happened "quite by accident," she said. Pregnant with her second child, she was taking a walk in the forest with her husband when she noticed red markers on the trees. She investigated and learned of the development project, which had not been vetted by the public. When a letter-writing campaign proved futile, Evgenia escalated her tactics, organizing a people's encampment in the forest that lasted two years. She is now filing a lawsuit against the French multinational funding the highway.

The Defend Khimki Forest campaign has been fearsome. Authorities frequently clobbered the campers. A local journalist who wrote a series exposing the corruption behind the highway's construction,was severely beaten and later died from his injuries. His death has yet to be investigated. Evgenia, herself, was badly hurt while trying to block a bulldozer from uprooting a grove of trees. Yet she does not talk of retreat. "The major task of the twenty-first century, one that supersedes all human rights work, is saving our planet," she said.

Civil resistance, our presenters continually reminded us, is not about nonviolent conflict transformation, negotiation, or principled pacifism, but the nonviolent seizing of power unjustly taken. Although its tactics are as old and varied as human history itself, scholars have only recently studied it. The pioneer in the field is Boston academic Gene Sharp, whose research of nonviolent resistance campaigns against the Nazis led him to conclude that power is neither monolithic nor permanent. Even the most repressive regime relies on the acquiescence of the populace to rule. Remove its "pillars of support," and it will topple.

In a comparative study of 323 violent and nonviolent campaigns that were attempting to overthrow a dictator or end foreign rule, researchers Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan (both present at the institute) found that nonviolent insurrections were almost twice as likely to succeed (52%) as the violent ones (28%) and

(Continued on Page 4)

People

(Continued from Page 3)

were more likely to result in a democratic transition. The difference in outcome is primarily due to popular participation. Nonviolent campaigns tend to engage far greater numbers of people than armed struggles. As one lecturer noted, lobbing bombs at the government prohibits you from developing a political base.

Peter Ackerman cited the Chenoweth and Stephan study in his presentation comparing the effectiveness of nonviolent and violent campaigns. A man of quiet demeanor with dark circles under his eyes that cover much of his face, Ackerman is consumed with promoting knowledge of strategic nonviolence. Decades ago, he wrote his dissertation on the subject — a 1,600-page tome that he reduced to a book which later inspired "A Force More Powerful," Steven York's award-winning documentary about nonviolent social movements. Investments from his fifteen-year-stint on Wall Street have enabled him to privately fund ICNC, which he co-founded with Jack Duvall in 2002. In addition to producing several documentaries, hosting institutes and training, ICNC is now archiving freedom songs online and distributing a video game that simulates planning a nonviolent uprising.

Ackerman's highly technical lecture included spirited talk about "sequencing tactics" and "maximizing your opponent's costs with a minimum of risk"—civil resistance as game theory. I had difficulty following him. But his goal was easily evident and holy. He wanted people to know human beings can wage political struggles without killing one another.

Along with theory, we learned about marvelous and largely unrecognized people's movements around the world. Who knew that the fight for women's suffrage, waged in the last century, is considered to be one of the largest transnational movements in modern history? Or that a mass mobilization against government corruption in Turkey during the mid-1990's engaged thirty million people at its peak?

Researcher Shaazka Beyerle described the Turkish campaign in a lecture on corruption and resistance. "Think of corruption as a system. How can civil resistance disrupt that system?" she asked, and then proceeded to give examples. In Afghanistan, villagers are employing nonviolent monitoring to prevent the scamming of communally-funded projects. Shaazka showed a Youtube video of village elders, equipped with a camera and tape measure, tracking a road construction project contracted to a private company. The contract is for a paved road four meters wide. "But look here," says a man as he drags the measuring tape across the asphalt. "It is only 2.5 meters wide in this area." The damning evidence is then brought to the company's engineer as part of "naming and shaming." This too is recorded on film.

It was the four leaders of people's movements who brought heart to the institute. Warm and charismatic, they offered living examples of the courage and conviction essential to any nonviolent campaign. (Tactics and strategy alone do

not sustain.) All four were honored midweek with the James Lawson Award, named after the African-American Methodist minister and civil rights leader who organized black college students to desegregate Nashville's lunch counters in the mid-1960's.

Lawson, 85, continues to be a peacebuilder, speaking out for immigrants and workers in his home city of Los Angeles. A guiding light for ICNC, he stayed with us throughout the institute, and was there to present the award named after him. The recipients were: Russian environmentalist Evgenia Chirokiva; Mkhuseli (Khusta) Jack, former leader in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa; Oscar Olivera, labor organizer and poetic leader of the indigenous people's movement that stopped multinationals from privatizing the water supply of Cochabamba, Bolivia, and Jenni Williams, co-founder of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA).

A person of relentless courage, Jenni has subverted the old ways of fighting, nurturing a movement among Zimbabwe's disregarded, a movement of mostly poor women, nearly 90,000-strong. At marches and demonstrations the women sing, "Woza Moya," Come Holy Spirit. Come Healing Wind. Imitating the men, they give the warrior's grunt and thrust one arm heavenward as if to hurl a spear, and then extend index finger and thumb to form an "L." Jenni described the gestures as "throwing love spears."

"WOZA is not a revolution. We are an evolution, trying to change hearts and minds among our own people, trying to empower women to claim their rights and hold onto them,"Jenni said.

For her work, this valiant, 50-year-mother has been arrested 52 times, beaten, and imprisoned. It was Jenni who asked the question about fear during the talk on repression. Still, she continues. I often saw her tapping out emails to Zimbabwe where WOZA women were encouraging people to vote in the country's upcoming presidential elections.

"We know the elections can be stolen and do not alone improve society," Jenni said, "so we are telling people, 'Mother your vote. Nurture it like a child. Your action for democracy does not stop here.'"

Fortitude and an uncommon hope were evident in all four recipients of the Lawson Award. For them, justice and dignity for the downtrodden were not merely aspirations, or prayer intentions, but realities we could create.

A month has passed since my days of studying people power. I have returned with new understandings and new desires, the words of Reverend Lawson, still ringing in my head: "Each of us comes from a huge stream of creation. Our gift of life is a gift to appropriate, use, and explore." Paraphrasing Saint Augustine, he added. "The glory of God is a human being fully alive.

My week at the institute felt like an immersion in this "glory." To sit among so many courageous people working to liberate their brothers and sisters in various corners of the planet was to glimpse the great and greening stream of life that gushes and trickles throughout the world. Always. Ω

Power

(Continued from Page 1)

illegal. High school students who volunteer with us at the Catholic Worker are always amazed that they can hold a sign against war on a public sidewalk without going to jail. Police officers sometimes abuse the population's sense of powerlessness by ordering citizens to cease constitutionally-protected behavior. I cannot tell you how many times a police officer has approached me at a demonstration saying that we cannot protest without a permit. When I reply, politely, firmly, "So long as our group is not blocking vehicular or pedestrian traffic, we do not need a permit," they usually back down.

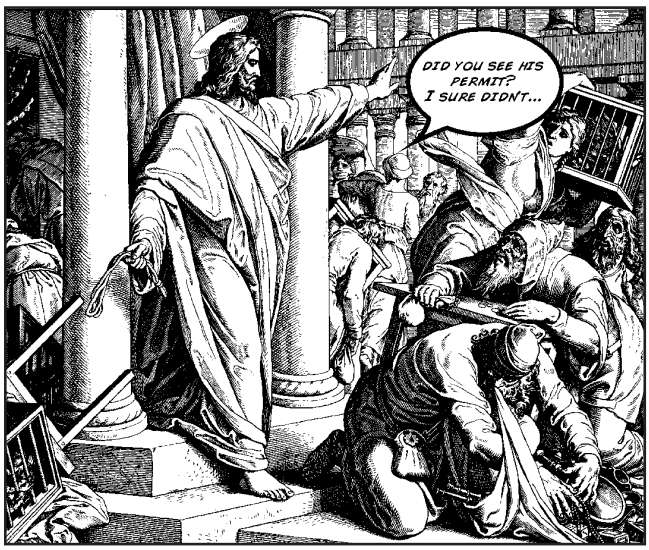
In one instance, a motorcycle cop threatened to arrest Tom Lewis and me for leafletting against the sale of guns near a mall entrance. When I told him the name of the Massachusetts Supreme Court case which upheld our right to leaflet, not only at the entrance, but inside the mall as well, the burly cop boasted, "You might win in the long run, but if you don't move now, I will have you locked up for the weekend." The smug abuse of power is a bitter pill indeed.

Consider the case of students at Boston's Northeastern University, who objected to a program by Israeli soldiers. Students for Justice in Palestine received an email in advance of the program urging them to show "respect and decorum," not to bring signs, and to "discourage vocal disruption." At the outset of the Israeli soldiers' talk, 35 students, wearing small signs taped to their shirts, stood up. One undergrad called the soldiers war criminals, two chanted slogans, and all of them walked out in less than a minute. The university placed the entire group on probation for not seeking a permit to protest at least a week in advance. All its members will be suspended unless they submit a "civility statement" laying down rules for future conduct. Interestingly, a much more raucous group, which disrupted at length a presentation by the pro-Palestinian speaker Norman Finkelstein, was not chastised. The university says this is because they had a permit. Although they were far less civil, none of them were required to promise better behavior in the future.

I cannot help but wonder what someone like Abbie Hoffman would do under such authoritarian rule. When a judge ordered a court officer to strip Hoffman of his American flag shirt, the unabashed activist raised his fist and said, "I regret that I have but one shirt to give for my country."

When American troops, surrounded by vastly superior German forces in World War II, received a demand for surrender, the US commander sent back a one-word reply: "Nuts."

Abusive power prevails when we allow it to do so. In June, when ethnically-partisan politicians in Sarajevo refused to provide newborns a national identity number necessary for them to get healthcare, furious and fed-up, stroller-pushing mothers surrounded the parliament. Their numbers quickly swelled into the thousands. The besieged politicians had a lesson in where real power actually lies.



Laws, rules, commandments, mores, and manners should never inhibit anyone from acting nonviolently against injustice. When Jesus saw money changers in the Temple, He reacted immediately. He did not ask for a permit a week in advance. He did not go to some far away, out of sight "free speech" zone. He did not hold back out of concern for social or religious decorum. He did not injure anyone, but He did respond vigorously.

Moral authority, not to mention political potency, is diminished by bureaucracy. The members of the pro-democracy, punk rock band, Pussy Riot, would never have received permission to sing against President Putin in Moscow's Saint Basil's Cathedral. Their actions prompted the state to reveal itself publicly as the grotesque bully they already knew it to be. Despite their jail sentences, those women are the victors.

Andrew Snowden swore secrecy, signed papers, and made promises before he was granted top-secret clearance to work for the National Security Administration. Once he knew that nefarious spying was going on against unsuspecting citizens and US allies, he was morally compelled to make it public. Some members of Congress suggested that Snowden would have been protected by whistle-blower statutes if he had complained through insider channels. Snowden knew that the same US government which cares nothing about its Bill of Rights at home, in Guantánamo, and abroad would not hesitate to squash him and his complaint like bugs. Don't forget, President Obama publicly defended assassinating US citizens as a matter of policy whenever he deems it a matter of national security. Snowden may deny it, but he is a hero, plain and simple.

I asked for a permit for the very first protest I organized thirty-five years ago. I have organized many hundreds of demonstrations since and have never asked permission from anyone again.

My freshman ethics professor told me that Thoreau's argument that he constituted a "majority of one" in his opposition to the US war against Mexico was the "height of arrogance." Maybe so, but I'd rather Thoreau's moral clarity than the fatalism that disempowers people from resisting immoral, irrational, or harmful political decisions. If the government does something wrong and is not challenged, it will surely do so again.

I was only eleven in 1969, when tens of thousands of mostly young Americans marched on Washington to protest the Vietnam War, but their slogans "Question Authority" and "Power to the People" ring more true to me now than ever. Ω

Interview with Edward Snowden

by Glen Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill

Editor's Note: This interview is excerpted from the July-August issue of the Boston-Cambridge Alliance for Democracy Dispatch. *Mr. Snowden worked for the National Security Agency (NSA), and later made its surveillance program public.*

Why did you decide to become a whistleblower?

"The NSA built an infrastructure that allows it to intercept almost everything. With this capability, the vast majority of human communications are automatically ingested without targeting. If I wanted to see your emails or your wife's phone, all I have to do is use intercepts. I can get your emails, passwords, phone records, credit cards.

...I do not want to live in a world where everything I do and say is recorded."

But isn't there a need for surveillance to try to reduce the chance of terrorist attacks such as Boston?

"We have to decide why terrorism is a new threat. There has always been terrorism. Boston was a criminal act. It [the capture of Tsarnaev] was not about surveillance but good, old-fashioned police work. The police are very good at what they do.

Do you think what you did is a crime?

"We have seen enough criminality on the part of government. They have narrowed the public sphere of influence."

What do the leaked documents reveal?

"That the NSA routinely lies in response to congressional inquiries about the scope of surveillance in America. I believe that when Senator Ron Wyden and Senator Mark Udall asked about the scale of this, the NSA said it did not have the tools to provide an answer. We do have the tools, and I have maps showing where people have been scrutinized the most. We collect more digital communications from Americans than we do from the Russians."

What is your reaction to Obama denouncing the leaks while welcoming a debate on the balance between security and openness?

"My immediate reaction was he was having difficulty defending it himself. He was trying to defend the unjustifiable and he knew it."

Do you think you are probably going to end up in prison?

"I could not do this without accepting the risk of prison. You can't come up against the world's most powerful intelligence agencies and not accept the risk. If they want to get you, over time they will." Ω

A Muslim at the Catholic Worker

I spent a lot of time in Catholic Worker houses during my college years and early 20s. I cut carrots for the soup kitchen at Mary House in New York City, demonstrated at the Pentagon with Catholic Workers in Washington, DC, even lived for a few weeks at the Saint Francis House on the north side of Chicago. I marveled at Dorothy Day because she re-imagined the world and lived her life in a way that created it anew. She called America's shadows to her dinner table, served them with love, and sat with them as a friend. It was the best antidote that I had seen for America's sickness. Ω

Ebbo Patel

Ebbo Patel is an American Muslim member of President Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships.

The Low Road

by Marge Piercy

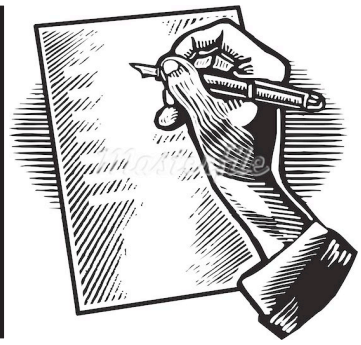
What can they do to you?
Whatever they want.
They can set you up,
they can bust you,
they can break your fingers,
they can burn your brain with electricity,
blur you with drugs till you can't walk,
can't remember,
they can take your child,
wall up your lover.
They can do anything
you can't stop them from doing.
How can you stop them?
Alone, you can fight,
you can refuse,
you can take what revenge you can
but they roll over you.

But two people fighting
back to back can cut through a mob,
a snake-dancing file can break a cordon,
an army can meet an army.

Two people can keep each other sane,
can give support, conviction,
love, massage, hope, sex.
Three people are a delegation,
a committee, a wedge.
With four you can play bridge
and start an organization.
With six you can rent a whole house,
eat pie for dinner with no seconds,
and hold a fund raising party.
A dozen make a demonstration.
A hundred fill a hall.
A thousand have solidarity
and your own newsletter;
ten thousand, power and your own paper;
a hundred thousand, your own media;
ten million, your own country.

It goes on one at a time,
it starts when you care to act,
it starts when you do
it again and they said no,
it starts when you say We
and know you who you mean,
and each day you mean one more. Ω

Letters



Dear Robert,
Thanks for your "Mason Street Musings" in your June/July issue.

From the article: "So I am still in ignorance about just why I am here." I am pushing 60 and for better or worse I echo your sentiments—except that when I say I don't know why I am here, I'm referring to this long-suffering world of ours and my short mortal stay on it!

I mean, I'm absolutely convinced that I have a purpose and place here, a mission (if you will), as God has for each and every one of us. I'm just totally mystified. Yes, I must do what I can in loving God and neighbor in the concrete circumstances of my life. I don't see the big picture, and I don't suppose I will until the end.

Yet as you intimate, we all have a profound need to feel a sense of vocation, that this is right for me. Somehow that has eluded me in this life. I simply stumble along, often feeling a sense of "quiet desperation." I suppose God desires me to be faithful even, indeed precisely, in that type of darkness. I can only think of Jesus whose final fulfilment of His purpose and mission was done in the heart of absolute darkness: "**My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?**" It is the mystery of our salvation, of God's final confrontation with the powers of darkness.

What a profound mystery our lives are!

I keep you all in my prayers. Please say one for me and my family.

In Christ's Great Love for us,

Paul del Junco
Toronto, Canada

Scott and Claire,
Hope all is well with you and your family. Here we're in the midst of the annual "break-up," when the great Yukon returns to the liquid form and marks the start of summer. There's been a steady flow of broken ice and water past the village and, so far, no signs of jamming up. Still, these in-between times are always causes of anxiety. But then, we all live in the great in-between times between the Resurrection and the Coming of the Kingdom.

May the Lord continue to bless your work and your days.

Patrick Tam
Emmonak, Alaska

Dear Scott & family,
God blessed you and us through the Boston bombing. You and your work are important to us.

I had forgotten that you were a runner, so you didn't come to mind after the bombing. I've also been preoccupied with the garment factory collapse in Bangladesh. It's understandable that you wrote about that close experience, and I hope it helps heal your soul, as writing this heals mine.

All my family worked in a textile town (Woonsocket, Rhode Island) as I think yours did also, so the factory collapse and death of over a thousand, mostly girls and women, really touched my soul. So I expected more in your newsletter about our socio-economic system that breeds this Wal-Mart mentality, like your April article "The War on the Poor." I didn't see any headline about the collapse, but I did read a letter by Joshua Laskin about Wal-Mart slavery. Could the slavery in Lincoln's time be better than it is today?

Then I got to reading your article about the marathon bombing and, low and behold, you were concerned, even with everything that was happening, about "corporate greed at the garment factory in Bangladesh."

When only 350 were reported dead in Bangladesh, I made signs. Within minutes of putting them up at Wal-Mart, three police cars surrounded me. After a lot of grief, they saw my soul (yes they can) and let me go without my signs.

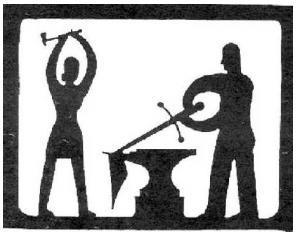
Marcel Saint Germain
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Catholic Worker Calendar

"They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore."Isaiah 2:4, inscribed at the College of the Holy Cross.

August 6 — Hiroshima Day Vigil: Please join us on the 68th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, in a vigil for nuclear disarmament. 4-5 P.M. Lincoln Square, Worcester.

August 14, September 4 & 18 — Mass or Evening Prayer: Please join us in prayer and song on Mason Street at 7:30 P.M. Ice cream or coffee cake to follow.



September 14 — Vigil For the Removal of ROTC: Please join us on the Feast of the Holy Cross for our annual vigil for the end of military training at the College of the Holy Cross. Noon- 1 P.M., on the steps of the Dinand Library. For more information, please call 508 753-3588 or email theresecw2@gmail.com.

September 27-29 — New England War Tax Resisters and Supporters Gathering: Please come to the Amazing Planet Farm Justice Center in Williamsville, Vermont (near Brattleboro). For a brochure or more information, contact Daniel Sicken, (802) 387-2798, dhsicken@yahoo.com.

Mason Street Musings

Once in a while, we encounter a guest who is so extraordinary that we cannot help but share his or her story. Kurt is one such person. He came to us after foreclosure forced him from an apartment he had lived in for years. A well-spoken, intelligent, older man, who loves to read, Kurt immediately impressed us.

I learned that he had been a reporter in New York City on September 11, 2001. Like most Americans, he wanted to make a personal sacrifice in response to the deaths of so many innocent people. He was too old to enlist in the military, but he was able to volunteer as a reporter. Attached to the US Army, he trained stateside and was deployed in Iraq during the most violent time of the US Occupation. Following the model of WWII journalist Ernie Pyle, Kurt avoided interviews with officers and chose instead to file articles about ordinary soldiers, stories which would make them "hometown heroes for a day."

While en route to an interview, he and his female army translator were kidnapped by Sunni insurgents. They were severely tortured. She was beaten and raped. He suffered broken ribs and knee caps. In a raid by US Special Forces, during which all their captors were killed, Kurt and his translator were freed. They both underwent long physical and mental rehabilitation. The strain was too much for Kurt's translator, who took her life in 2012. Kurt held on until, in a remarkable tribute to human resilience, he went beyond physical healing to embrace an optimistic philosophy about human goodness. Although still plagued by traumatic stress, Kurt had his hand tattooed with the phrase, "Choose Life." He will be moving into his own apartment on Wednesday. Most people in his situation would be content to live quietly on disability, but Kurt has an interview on Thursday with the Peace Corps. Like many of our guests, Kurt gives inordinate praise to those of us who work here at the Catholic Worker, but we feel he is the one who deserves praise.

May Kathryn Duffy

The hope we gleaned from Kurt was magnified by the birth of Claire's and my first grandchild, May Kathryn Duffy, on June 23rd in Egypt. (I call her "Scotti May.") Our son Justin, who works to improve public education in Cairo, and our daughter-in-law Patricia returned to Worcester with their cherub on July 7th. Claire and I cannot look at her infant face long enough. Such innocence. Such promise. Such hope.

We want to take May's young hope and meld it with Kurt's more seasoned optimism to become better peacemakers and providers of shelter to those in need. We pray that similar optimism will sway the people of Egypt to come together for a peaceful future.

Thank you all for seeing us through what has been one of the hottest and most humid summers on record. (Claire has taken to wearing a cloth filled with ice around her neck.) I cool down by reading your letters after a long run. Nothing like running to make sitting still feel wonderful. Blessings! **Scott**

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